

COUNTRY: Germany

COMMITTEE: UN WOMEN

TOPIC: Elimination of the Raising Domestic Violence During Covid-19 Pandemic

A recent representative study shows that since the first shutdown in 2020, there have been warnings in Germany of an increase in partnership violence around 3% of the women surveyed have experienced physical violence by their partners during the period of strict contact restrictions at home:

3.8% felt threatened by it and 3.6% were raped by him.

Because the statics only record cases that have been reported; the number of unreported cases is much higher: The Weisse Ring assumes that only 1 in 5 crimes is reported.

This first major German study on this topic shows ‘’ Almost 5 percent of partners control the women's contacts.’’

Physical violence: 3.1 percent of the women were involved in at least one form of physical conflict in the home, for instance being physically abused.

Sexual violence: 3.6 percent of women were forced into sex by their partners.

Emotional violence: 3.8 percent of the women felt threatened by their partners and 2.2 percent were not permitted to leave their home without permission. In 4.6 percent of all cases, the partners controlled the women's contacts with others, including digital channels such as messenger services.

The researchers also asked whether the women concerned were aware of and utilized support services:

48.2 percent of the victims were aware of counseling helplines and 3.9 percent had placed a call.

32.4 percent were aware of the domestic violence hotline and 2.7 percent had called the number to find help.

44.3 percent were aware of the parental distress line and 21.5 percent had placed a call there.

5.5 percent were aware of the "Codeword Mask 19" campaign, in which pharmacists contact the authorities when a customer uses a code word. 1.8 percent had made use of this possibility.

Although the numbers are less than the other countries we believe that even 1 woman is so valuable and important.

In Germany, women are in the economy, politics, and many more areas like these and mostly they are well educated too. So based on this fact, women are a really big part of our lives. We would never want any woman to be exposed to violence in their homes which especially happens during the Covid-19 pandemic. There are some particular reasons which make women afraid to leave the abusement environment.

One of the reasons that women are afraid to leave their partners even if they are getting abused by them during the pandemic time is because most women don’t have economic independence in today’s circumstances related to the Covid-19 pandemic. Because during the time most of the workplaces have shut down. But still, the German Government gives many opportunities to women to be independent economically. By that, we goal to make women feel free and don’t need their partners to stand in life. In past years we also made that kind of supports.

In 2015, by law, an arrangement was made to increase the rate of women on the supervisory boards of 108 enterprises registered in the stock exchange from 5 percent to 30 percent, and to determine the women's quotas for approximately 3,500 enterprises.

In case, the partner of a woman is abusive; Germany has taken big measurements in the past.

Since the International Women's Year(1975), daily violence against women in Germany has become a matter of public debate. Talking about violence against women had been taboo until that time. Until then, the extent, background, and repercussions of domestic violence, particularly that perpetrated by the partner, had remained largely hidden. Domestic violence was brought into the public front under the phrase "What is private is political," and its taboo status was gradually destroyed.

For example, on November 1, 1976, the Federal Government and the Berlin Senate established the first German women's shelter in Berlin as a test project, followed by the Rendsburg Women's Shelter as a model for rural areas. The Federal Government funded and published a series of research, further-training material, and publications on this topic in the early phases, which drew up reports and elaborated ideas on the financing of women's shelters. Studies on working with perpetrators and crisis intervention programs have been included in the previous ten years. There are many available programs for men who are perpetrators of domestic violence in Germany. However, such programs do not cover all of Germany. The goals of these programs are, amongst others, to confront the perpetrator with the offense and its consequences, to take over responsibility for violent behavior, to develop empathy for the victims, and to elaborate alternative, non-violent strategies. The duration of the programs, as well as their concepts, vary. Many of the programs are group courses. The ideal duration is at least one year.  
 The first such programs were started in the 1990s. Most of them work with men who are sent by court orders and with men seeking assistance on their initiative. The Federal Government -due to the responsibility of the Länder in this area – has data on the number of such offender programs. The Federal Government, within its competence, is supporting the networking of these initiatives working with offenders.

Furthermore, the areas of focus picked take into account recent advancements and experience gained in Germany's fight against violence. Whereas 20 years ago, pilot projects including special services to aid victims (such as women's shelters, crisis hotlines, and counseling centers) were at the forefront of activities, such institutions today have many years of experience. It's now a question of putting this to political use. This is why, at the moment, the work in this subject is focused on the nationwide networking of these facilities.

In the past years, we also took some precautions to prevent these incidents. If we have to give some examples;

The Federal Ministry of Family Affairs, Seniors, Women, and Youth launched a new media package for schools dealing with violence against women.

An expert hearing under the chairmanship of the Federal Minister of Justice in October 1999, within the framework of the general revision of the penal code on sexual offenses.

Upon the application, a law was created where women whose health deteriorated as a result of violence against them could make a claim based on the Law on Compensation of Victims of Violent Crimes (Compensation for Victims of Crime Law). The Federal Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs has published an information leaflet titled "Assisting Victims of Violent Crimes" to provide information on benefits and services that can be requested under the law and distributed it to associations and public institutions.

So we, Germany, are offering some solutions to decrease these numbers or even prevent them in today’s world:

We should provide women with a contact app that doesn’t need an internet connection. Because we should consider that not every woman can reach the internet. And because of this limitation, we should use posters in supermarkets or pharmacies. Especially the places they can reach out.

We should also build more women’s shelters and as a location, every city must have at least 1 or 2.

Providing money to the places that fight against violence and abusements such as Weisser Ring.

And we should consider their propositions about precautions they see necessary about fighting against the violence against women during the pandemic.

We can provide workplaces to women and help them to make their own money even more.

Also for the women who are abused by their partners during the pandemic and have children, we can provide them economic help as the government for both their children and themselves.

And by that time because there is no contact between people, we can organize meetings online and participants can talk about their situations or people would be able to see if the woman has any scars if she had been abused physically during the pandemic. And there must be educative sessions for men who have criminal records. Also in our education system, we must add exclusive classes about this major problem or at least as a subject.